
DRAMATIS PERSONAE¹

CARIO [slave of Chremylos]

CHREMYLOS²

WEALTH [the god Plutus]³

CHORUS OF FARMERS [with **LEADER**]

BLEPSIDEMOS [friend of Chremylos]

POVERTY [the goddess Penia]

WIFE of Chremylos

A JUST MAN

A "SYCOPHANT" [a false accuser, who has harassed the rich with lawsuits in order to get money by settlements]

OLD WOMAN

YOUNG MAN [former lover of Old Woman]

HERMES [the god]

A PRIEST OF ZEUS

[Mute Characters:

CHILD OF JUST MAN

WITNESS OF SYCOPHANT]

1. Bracketed material lacks manuscript authority; it is intended only to facilitate a first reading of the play. Line numbers are borrowed from the Greek texts of the plays; they will not always be sequential in English.

2. In the words of the fifth "*hypothesis*," or summary of the play, found in the manuscripts (and dating from Hellenistic commentators), "Chremylos is constructed from *chreos* [debt] and *haimulos* [wily] as 'deceptive': so, 'the one who deceives his debtors—on account of poverty'; and Cario is clearly Greek for 'slave,' . . . and Blepsidemus is a word signifying a beggar, who's looking always to the *demos* [populace]."

3. In *Theogony* (967–74) Hesiod commences his account of "Those goddesses who, having slept with mortal men / Being immortal, gave birth to children like unto gods" with "Demeter, Who, a goddess among goddesses, gave birth to Plutus [Wealth] / Having mingled in erotic affection with the hero Iasion / On a thrice-ploughed fallow field in the fertile land of Crete: / He, noble one, goes across the earth and the wide back of the sea, / Everywhere; and for whomever He encounters, and into whose hands He comes, / He establishes abundance, and to him He annexes great riches." See also the end of the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* 488–89.

CARIO: How grievous a business it is—Oh Zeus and gods!—

To become the slave of a master who has lost his *wits*!

For if the servant should happen to say what is best,

But the opinion of the owner is against doing these things,

The servant must necessarily share in the evils.

For the divinity doesn't allow the one who is sovereign

To rule over the body, but rather the purchaser.

So be it. . . . But Loxias,⁴

"Who sings oracles from a tripod of beaten gold,"⁵

I blame, with this just blame: that

Being a healer and a wise prophet, as they assert,

He sent my master away in a melancholy-mad state,

Who's following along behind a blind fellow,⁶

Doing the contrary of what it befits him to do!

For we who see are the guides of the blind,

But he follows, and also constrains me to do so,

And in regard to these things responds with not even a grunt!⁷

. . . [To Chremylos] Now there's no way that I'll remain silent,

If you will not explain why in the world we are following this fellow,

Master, but I will keep bothering you.

For you won't beat me while I'm wearing this wreath at least.⁸

CHREMYLOS: By Zeus, I'll take off the wreath, if you cause me any grief,

So that you will suffer worse!

CARIO: Nonsense! I will *not* stop,

Until you explain to me *who* in the world *this* is;

For I ask this out of great goodwill towards you.

4. "The Oblique One"—an epithet of Apollo, on account of the obliquity or ambiguity of his oracles.

5. A line in tragic style, perhaps from a tragedy which we no longer have. Aristophanes regularly thus parodies or spoofs the solemn lines from awesome tragedy.

6. Literally, "blind human" (*anthrōpos*)—the divinity of Plutus is not recognizable to Cario.

7. This is Bentley's emendation of the obviously faulty reading of two of the three main manuscripts; the third manuscript has a reading that makes it Plutus whose silence is being referred to by Cario.

8. Worn for the ritual of consulting the oracle at Delphi, from which they are returning.

CHREMYLOS: But I won't hide it from you; because, among my household
 Slaves, I consider you the most trustworthy and thieving.
 I, being a god-revering and just man, have
 Fared poorly and been impoverished.

CARIO: That I know.

30 **CHREMYLOS:** But others are wealthy: temple-robbers, orators,
 And sycophants, and rascals!

CARIO: I am persuaded of it.

CHREMYLOS: So, I went to inquire of the god—
 As regards my own miserable life,
 Believing that the arrows had pretty much been shot;
 But as regards my son, who happens to be my only one—
 Inquiring if *he* ought to change *his* ways,
 So as to be all around wicked, unjust, wholesome in not a single respect:
 On the belief that this would be of advantage in life.

CARIO: What then did Phoebus pronounce, from the sacred wreaths?⁹

40 **CHREMYLOS:** You will learn. For the god plainly said to me the following.
 Whomever I might encounter when I first went out,¹⁰
 He bade me not to leave off from this person anymore,
 But to persuade him to follow me home.

CARIO: And who was the first you encountered?

CHREMYLOS: This fellow.

CARIO: But didn't you understand the thought of the god,
 Which was expressed—you most benighted one!—most plainly:
 That your son was to practice the *local custom*?!

CHREMYLOS: On what do you base this judgment?

CARIO: It is so obvious that
 Even a blind man is of the opinion that he knows that it is highly
 50 Advantageous to practice nothing wholesome nowadays!¹¹

9. Another line in high tragic style, spoofing tragedy. Phoebus is a name of Apollo.

10. A spoofing echo of Euripides' tragedy *Ion* 534ff.

11. Another spoofing echo of a fragment of Euripides: *Tennes*, frag. 695, "there is nothing just nowadays."

CHREMYLOS: It is not possible that *that's* the drift of the oracle!
It must incline toward something else GREATER. But now if to us
This fellow would explain whoever in the world he is, and why and
For what need he has come here, with us two,
We would learn what the oracle has in mind for us.

CARIO [to the blind Wealth]: Hey, you! Explain yourself, who you might be,
Or do I do THIS!? You need to talk fast!

WEALTH: I say to you: go holler!

CARIO: Did you hear who he said he is?

CHREMYLOS: He said this to *you*, not to *me*—obviously,
Because *you* inquired of him in a gauche and harsh fashion.
But [speaking to Wealth] if you are pleased by the ways of an
Oath-Keeping man, give the explanation to me.

60

WEALTH: I for my part say to you: go weep!

CARIO: Accept the man and the omen of the god.

CHREMYLOS: By Demeter, you won't stay satisfied!

CARIO: Because if you don't tell me, I will destroy you, evil one, in an
evil fashion!

WEALTH: Fellow, get away from me, both of you!

CHREMYLOS: Oh yeah!?

CARIO: Now what I say is best, Master:
I shall exterminate this human, in the worst way!
For, having placed him on some cliff, I'll leave him
And go away, from whence he'll fall, breaking his neck!

70

CHREMYLOS: So take him quickly!

WEALTH: No way!

CHREMYLOS: Will you not answer?

WEALTH: But if you two should learn of me who I am, I know well that
You two will do me some harm, and will not let me go!

CHREMYLOS: But by the gods, we will, if you wish it!

WEALTH: First let go of me.

CHREMYLOS: There, we let go of you.

WEALTH: Now listen. For it seems that it is necessary for me
To utter what I was prepared to keep secret. . . .
For, I am *Wealth*!

CHREMYLOS: You most abominable
Of all men! You, being Wealth, kept silent about it?

80 **CARIO:** YOU are Wealth, in this miserable condition!?

CHREMYLOS: Oh Phoebus Apollo, and gods and lesser divinities!—
And Zeus! What *are* you saying? YOU, in this state, are really *him*?

WEALTH: Yes.

CHREMYLOS: That One Himself?

WEALTH: The very one.

CHREMYLOS: From where, then, do you say
You are walking, in this squalid condition?

WEALTH: I am coming from Patrocles'¹² place,
Who has never bathed since he was born.

CHREMYLOS: How did you come to suffer so badly? Tell me.

WEALTH: Zeus did these things to me, out of envy for humans.
For when I was a lad, I vowed that
To the just and wise and orderly
90 Only would I go; and he made me blind,
So that I would not be able to distinguish any of these.
Just so, That One envies the worthy.

CHREMYLOS: And yet it is on account of¹³ the worthy alone, and the just,
That he is honored!

WEALTH: I agree with you.

12. The name belongs to Socrates' younger half-brother (Plato, *Euthydemus* 297e), who appears to have been a wealthy and prominent office holder during the struggles surrounding the tyranny of The Thirty (Isocrates 18.5–8; Debra Nails, *People of Plato* [Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002], 218–19)—and Socrates is repeatedly satirized as failing to bathe by Aristophanes: *Clouds* 836, *Birds* 1282.

13. "On account of" translates the word *dia*, which can mean either "by means of," "through," or "on account of," "for the sake of"—and this ambiguity is repeatedly present in the lines that follow.

CHREMYLOS: Look here,
If you could see again, as before,
Would you avoid the wicked?

WEALTH: I do declare so.

CHREMYLOS: And you would frequent the just?

WEALTH: By all means.
For I have not seen them for a long time.

CHREMYLOS: That's no wonder; neither have I, who can see!

WEALTH: Now let me go. For you know about me.

100

CHREMYLOS: By Zeus, so much the more will we hold you!

WEALTH: Did I not proclaim that you two were going to give me trouble?

CHREMYLOS: And you, I entreat, be persuaded,
And don't leave me! For you will not find,
In seeking, another man better in his ways than me.

CARIO: By Zeus, there isn't another, except me!

WEALTH: That's what they all say. But when they
Truly happen upon me and become wealthy,
Their wickedness simply has no limits!

CHREMYLOS: That's so—but not all are bad!

110

WEALTH: But by Zeus, yes, every single one!

CARIO: You'll grieve for that!

CHREMYLOS: But to know how many good things will accrue to you, if
You stay with us, pay heed, so that you'll learn:
For I think—I think—with the god's help, be it said,¹⁴
That I shall rid you of this illness of the eyes,
And make you see!

WEALTH: That may you never do,
Because I do not wish to see again!

CHREMYLOS: What are you saying?!

CARIO: This human is miserable by nature!

14. A spoofing echo of Euripides' *Medea* 625.

WEALTH: Zeus, knowing about the follies of these people, if he should
 120 Learn, would rub me out!

CHREMYLOS: But doesn't he do that *now*,
 He who lets you stumble around?

WEALTH: I don't know. I shudder very much at *That One*.

CHREMYLOS: In truth?—you most cowardly of all divinities!
 For do you suppose that the tyranny of Zeus,
 And His thunderbolts, would be worth two cents,
 If you were able to see again for even a short time?

WEALTH: Don't say these things, you rascal!

CHREMYLOS: Remain calm;
 For I shall demonstrate that YOU are *much* more powerful
 Than Zeus!

WEALTH: You mean *me*?

CHREMYLOS: By Uranus [Heaven], Yes!

130 Look, [to Cario] on account of *what* does Zeus rule over the gods?

CARIO: On account of money; because he has most of it.

CHREMYLOS: Come, who is it that provides it to him?

CARIO: This One! [Pointing to Wealth.]

CHREMYLOS: And on account of whom do they sacrifice to him? Isn't it on
 account of This One?

CARIO: And by Zeus, they straightaway pray to become wealthy!

CHREMYLOS: So isn't This One the cause, and couldn't he easily
 Make these things cease, if he wished?

WEALTH: What do you mean?

CHREMYLOS: That not a single one among humans would sacrifice
 anymore—

Not an ox, not a cake, not a single thing,
 If you didn't wish it!

WEALTH: How so?

CHREMYLOS: How so? There's no way

140 How anyone will be able to *buy* from anywhere, if you aren't
 Present yourself, to give the money! So that

The power of Zeus, if he should give you any grief, you can by yourself dissolve!

WEALTH: What are you saying? On account of *me*, they sacrifice to Zeus?

CHREMYLOS: That's what I'm asserting. And by Zeus, if anything is shining,
And beautiful, or charming for humans, it comes about on account
Of you. For all things are subservient to wealth.

CARIO: In my own case, it is on account of a teeny bit of money that
I have become a slave—on account of not being equally wealthy.¹⁵

CHREMYLOS: And they say that the Corinthian courtesans,
When some poor bloke tries to engage them,
Pay him no mind; but if he's wealthy,
They turn their assholes to him straightway on this account.

150

CARIO: And they say the boys do this very same thing,
For the sake, not of their lovers, but of the money.

CHREMYLOS: The worthy ones don't, but the whores; since
The worthy don't ask for money.

CARIO: For what, then?

CHREMYLOS: One for a good horse; and one for hunting dogs.

CARIO: That's probably because, being ashamed to ask for money,
They gloss the baseness over with a name.

CHREMYLOS: On account of *you*, all arts and clever crafts
That exist among humans have been discovered:
For one of us sits making shoes—

160

CARIO: And there's another who works at bronze, and one as carpenter—

CHREMYLOS: And one smelts gold, taking the gold from *you*—

CARIO: And one's a thief, by Zeus, and one's a burglar—

CHREMYLOS: And one's a fuller—

CARIO: And one washes fleece—

CHREMYLOS: And one tans hides—

15. The scholia at this point lead some to substitute for the phrase after the dash a different phrase: "having been a freeman before."

CARIO: And one sells onions—

CHREMYLOS: And on account of *you*, the nabbed adulterer is plucked!¹⁶

WEALTH: Alas, miserable me! This has for a long time escaped my notice!

170 **CARIO:** Isn't it on account of This One that the Great King preens himself?

CHREMYLOS: Isn't it on account of This One that the Assembly meets?

CARIO: What about the triremes? Don't you fill them? Tell me!

CHREMYLOS: Isn't it This One who feeds the foreign legion in Corinth?¹⁷

CARIO: Won't Pamphilus¹⁸ come to grief on account of This One?

CHREMYLOS: And The Needle-seller along with Pamphilus?

CARIO: Doesn't Agyrrhius fart on account of This One?

CHREMYLOS: Does not Philepsius relate his stories for your sake?¹⁹

CARIO: Isn't the alliance with the Egyptians on account of you?²⁰

CHREMYLOS: Doesn't Lais love Philonides for your sake?²¹

180 **CARIO:** And the tower of Timotheus²²—

CHREMYLOS: —may it fall on you!

But are not all affairs brought about on account of *you*?

For, that *you*, most singularly, are the cause of all,

Both of bad things and of good, know well.

16. An adulterer caught by the husband could be put to death; "plucking" refers to the alternative punishment, his paying a large sum to have his pubic hairs plucked.

17. A force placed in Corinth by the Athenian general Iphicrates after a Spartan attack in 390 B.C.; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.5 (the *Wealth* as we have it was first produced in 388 B.C.).

18. An Athenian general who led a force to Aegina in 389 B.C. (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.1.2), and who was apparently charged with theft of public funds (see frag. 14 of the comic poet Plato); his associate Aristoxenus was known as the "needle-seller."

19. Demosthenes (24.134–35) refers to Philepsius and Agyrrhius as prominent political figures, and reports that the former was thrown into prison for embezzlement; his "stories" would presumably be the excuses he gave to the court; Agyrrhius is satirized in *Assembly of Women* 102ff.

20. Athens allied with the king of Cyprus and the Pharaoh of Egypt against Persia in 391 B.C. (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 4.8.24 and 5.1.10).

21. Lais was a legendary courtesan residing in Corinth (see also below, 303–6); Philonides of Melite was an ugly rich man ridiculed in several comic fragments.

22. A very wealthy son of the great general Conon; he would later become a major political and military figure. He apparently built in Athens a tower dedicated to Fortuna.

CARIO: For certainly the ones who get the best of their enemies in war, on each occasion,

Are those who have This One alone sitting on their side!

WEALTH: Do I, single-handed, have the power to do so many things?

CHREMYLOS: Yes, by Zeus, and many *more* than these!

So that no one has ever become full of you!

For of all the other things there is surfeit:

Of erotic love—

190

CARIO: of bread—

CHREMYLOS: of music—

CARIO: of sweets—

CHREMYLOS: Of honor—

CARIO: of cakes—

CHREMYLOS: of manliness—

CARIO: of dried figs—

CHREMYLOS: Of love of honor—

CARIO: of barley-bread—

CHREMYLOS: of generalship—

CARIO: of pea soup—

CHREMYLOS: But of *you*, no one has ever become full!

No, if someone might get thirteen talents,

He desires all the more to get sixteen;

And if he accomplishes this, he wants forty,

Or claims that life is not worth living for him.

WEALTH: Well, to me at least you two seem to speak well;

Except there is one thing only that I fear.

CHREMYLOS: Explain, concerning what?

WEALTH: How I would become master

Of this power that you claim I have.

CHREMYLOS: By Zeus! But they all do say

That Wealth is most cowardly!²³

200

23. See Euripides' *Phoenician Women* 597: "Plutus/Wealth is a coward."

WEALTH: No! Least! But I
 Am slandered by some burglar! For once when he had broken
 And entered, he had nothing to take in the house,
 Finding everything locked up;
 And so he called my foresight cowardice.

CHREMYLOS: Do not now worry about anything; if you become
 A spirited, real man in the affair,
 210 I will show you to be sharper in your sight than Lynceus.²⁴

WEALTH: How will you, being a mortal, have the power to do this?

CHREMYLOS: I am very hopeful on account of the things
 Said to me by "Phoebus Himself, shaking the Pythian wreath."²⁵

WEALTH: And *He* also knows about these matters?

CHREMYLOS: So I assert.

WEALTH: Watch out!

CHREMYLOS: Don't give it any thought, Good Fellow!
 For—know it well—even if I have to die,
 I myself shall do these things!

CARIO: And, if you wish, me too!

CHREMYLOS: And many will be the allies on either side of us—
 As many as are just and without a pearl of barley.

220 **WEALTH:** Alas! You speak of rascally allies for us!

CHREMYLOS: Not if they become wealthy again as at the beginning!
 But you [to Cario], run swiftly, go—

CARIO: What shall I do? Tell me!

CHREMYLOS: Summon the fellow farmers, whom you will probably find
 In the fields, miserably toiling,
 So that each, being present here, equally
 Would have a share with us in this Wealth.

24. One of the Argonauts, who had eyes that could see into the earth. See Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonauts* 1.153–55.

25. Another spoof on a line from an unknown tragedy.

CARIO: I am on my way; this little piece of meat²⁶ here
Let someone from within take and bring in.

CHREMYLOS: I'll take care of *that*; you run and get it done.
But you, Wealth, most mighty of all divinities,
Come inside here with me; for this house
It is, that today you must
Make full of money, through just and unjust means!

230

WEALTH: But I am on each occasion pained—by the gods!—to enter
Someone else's house;
For I never reap any good from it.
For if I happen to go into a thrifty man's,
Immediately he buries me in the earth;
And then if some worthy human who is a friend comes along
Asking for a little bit of money to take,
He denies that he ever saw me.
But if I happen to go into a mad human's,
I am cast among whores and dice,
And thrown naked out the door in no time.

240

CHREMYLOS: For you have never happened upon a man of measure.
This is in a sense always my way;
For I have no man who's my rival in enjoying being thrifty—
But also, in turn, at spending, when this is needed.
But let's go in, as I want you to see
Both my wife and my only son,
Whom I love very much, after you.

250

WEALTH: I believe it.

CHREMYLOS: For why would anyone not speak to you what is true?

[Exit Chremylos and Wealth; enter Cario, with Chorus.]

CARIO: Oh you who've often eaten thyme²⁷ with my master,
Men who are friends and neighbors and lovers of toiling,

26. The left-over from the sacrifice to Apollo that Chremylos made before the action of the play began.

27. A diet relying on herbs is a sign of poverty.

Hasten energetically, for the occasion does not admit delay,
But this is the peak moment, when it is necessary to show up and
defend him!

CHORUS LEADER: Don't you see that we have been for some time hurrying,
Eager in spirit, befitting men now feeble with age?
But you probably would demand that I run, before you have explained
to me,

260 Why your master has called me hither!

CARIO: But have I not told you long ago?! But you do not listen!
For the master declares that all of you will in pleasure
Live, leaving behind a cold and harsh life!

CHORUS LEADER: But what, and from what, is this business he declares?

CARIO: You rascals, he's coming here with a certain old man in tow,
Who is filthy, stooped, miserable, shriveled, bald, toothless;
And I think, by Uranus, that he's even circumcised!²⁸

CHORUS LEADER: Oh messenger bearing golden words, what do you mean?
Explain to me again.

You are making it clear that he is coming with a sack of money!?

270 **CARIO:** I am saying that he has a sack of elderly evils!

CHORUS LEADER: So then: you, for your trickery, wouldn't deserve to
get away
Without punishment, when I have this stick?!

CARIO: Now do you regard me as a human who is by nature such,
In every respect, and would you believe me capable of saying what is in
no way sound?!

CHORUS LEADER: Look how solemn this smooth fellow is! Your shins cry
"Ouch, ouch!" and your feet are longing for the shackles!

CARIO: You've drawn the lot, for jury duty, in your *coffin*,
So why don't you go?! Charon will give you your meal ticket!²⁹

28. A mark of barbarism.

29. A citizen would draw a letter-lot designating which court he would serve in for the day as jurymen, and he would get a ticket at the end of the day that entitled him to receive his pay. Charon is the ferryman who conveys the souls of the dead across the river Styx to their permanent abode in the underworld.

CHORUS LEADER: Split yourself! You're a Helot³⁰ brat and by nature impudent!

A trickster, who doesn't have the stomach to explain to us—
Who, wearied with much toil, and not having leisure, have come
Here eager in spirit, having passed by many thyme plants!

280

CARIO: But I will no longer hide it from you. For, men, it is *Wealth*
Whom my master, who's going to make you wealthy, comes bringing!

CHORUS LEADER: Is it really possible for all of us to be wealthy?!

CARIO: By the gods, very Midases (if you'll take the ears of an ass³¹).

CHORUS LEADER: How pleased I am, and delighted!—and I want to dance
For pleasure, if indeed you are really saying true things!

[The Chorus and Cario begin dancing and continue through line 315.]

CARIO: And I for my part will want—"threttanelo!"—to
Mimic the Cyclops, and, with my two feet thus stamping in rhythm,
Lead you!³² But come, children, shout repeatedly,
Bleating the songs of sheep
And of stinking goats:
Follow with uncovered, erect pricks; and you goats will have
your breakfast!³³

290

CHORUS: And we for our part—"threttanelo!"—will seek you, Cyclops;
And when we, bleating, find you—hungering,
With your leather wallet and watery wild herbs, hung over,
Leading your sheep, and
Happening to fall asleep somewhere—
We'll take a great burning stake, and put out your eye!

300

30. Helots were the serf-slave people under Spartan domination.

31. Midas, famously given by Dionysus a touch that turned everything to gold, was also cursed with ass's ears by Apollo, as punishment for having dared to judge the latter god the just loser in the great contest with the satyr Marsyas (over who had greater musical wisdom).

32. The scholia explain that the references are parodying a dithyramb of Philoxenus of Cythera, entitled *Loves of Galatea and Cyclops*, in which the word "threttanelo" is used to imitate the sound of the harp, and the Cyclops, dancing the so-called "Cyclops dance," was depicted with a wallet and herbs (see line 298 below).

33. Literally, "drink wine neat": as the scholia explain, this was a word for breakfasting, because that meal often or usually included bread dipped in wine.

CARIO: And for my part, that Circe who mixed the poisons,
 Who once in Corinth persuaded the companions of Philonides³⁴
 That they were swine,
 And that they ate kneaded shit, which she kneaded for them,
 I shall imitate in all ways!³⁵
 And do you, grunting with love of pleasure,
 Follow mother, piggies!

CHORUS: And then you, the Circe who mixed the poisons,
 310 And bewitched and corrupted the companions,
 We will catch by love of pleasure;
 Mimicing the Son of Laertes,³⁶ we shall hang you up by the balls,
 And befoul your nose with dung like a goat!
 A very gaping Aristyllus,³⁷ you will say:
 "Follow mother, piggies!"

CARIO: But enough now: leave off the jesting,
 And turn to another style;
 I, going now in secret
 Want to take from the master
 320 Some bread and meat—
 Which having chewed, it's back to the toil.

[Cario goes inside.]

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]

[Chremylos comes out.]

CHREMYLOS: To bid you "cheerful welcome," men who are neighbors,
 Is now old-fashioned and musty;
 But I salute you, because you have come, eager in spirit,
 And keyed up, and in no slothful fashion!
 See that you stand by me in the rest,
 And become really the saviors of the god!

34. For Philonides, see above on line 179.

35. This mingles the legend of Odysseus with that of Philonides.

36. In the *Odyssey* (22.178), Melanthius is hung up, with his hands and feet tied to a board, by Odysseus.

37. The scholia indicate that the "gaping" of Aristyllus refers to his notoriety in oral sex, apparently as a coprophiliac—referred to also in *Assemblywomen* 647, and frag. 551.

CHORUS LEADER: Be bold: for you will seem to see in me Ares!
 For terrible would it be, if for the sake of three obols in money
 We used to jostle one another in the Assembly each time,
 But I would let someone take Wealth himself!

330

CHREMYLOS: And now I see Blepsidemos here
 Approaching also. It's obvious that
 He has heard something of the affair, by his pace and speed.

BLEPSIDEMOS: What's afoot then? From whence and in what way
 Has Chremylos suddenly become wealthy? I don't believe it!
 But—by Heracles!—there was much talk among those sitting in the
 barbers' shops,

To the effect that the man has suddenly become wealthy!

But this is to me the wonder: that

Having fared worthily, he should call in his friends!

This is not what's done, according to local custom anyway!

340

CHREMYLOS: But I will speak hiding nothing:³⁸ by the gods,
 Oh Blepsidemos, we are faring better than yesterday,
 So that it's possible to share! For you are one of the friends.

BLEPSIDEMOS: But have you truly become, as they say, wealthy?!

CHREMYLOS: I will be, very shortly, if the god is willing—
 For there is, . . . there is, . . . a certain risk in the business.

BLEPSIDEMOS: What's that?

CHREMYLOS: What?

BLEPSIDEMOS: Speak and finish whatever you were just saying!

CHREMYLOS: If we get things right, it's prosperity forever!
 But if we slip, totally rubbed out!

350

BLEPSIDEMOS: The business appears evil,
 And does not please me; because immediately
 To become thus over-wealthy, and at the same time to be fearful,
 Is not at all healthy for a working man.

CHREMYLOS: How not at all healthy?

38. Another spoofing echo of Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 503.

BLEPSIDEMOS: If you come having stolen—by Zeus!—
Some silver or gold from
The god there, and then perhaps you have remorse . . .

CHREMYLOS: Apollo shield me from such! By Zeus, I have not!

360 **BLEPSIDEMOS:** Stop chattering, good fellow; for I know clearly!

CHREMYLOS: Do not suspect any such thing of me!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Alas! There is nothing simply sound about anyone,
But all are overcome by gain!

CHREMYLOS: By Demeter, *you* don't seem healthy to me!

BLEPSIDEMOS: How greatly he has changed from his former ways!

CHREMYLOS: By Uranus, fellow, you're mad with melancholy!

BLEPSIDEMOS: His look is shifty;
It is obvious that some completely wicked thing has been done.

370 **CHREMYLOS:** I know what you're croaking about!—Supposing me to have
Stolen something, you're seeking a share!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Seeking to share?—In what?

CHREMYLOS: Well that's not it, but something else is afoot.

BLEPSIDEMOS: So it's not theft—but violent robbery?!

CHREMYLOS: You're possessed by an evil divine spirit!

BLEPSIDEMOS: So you haven't committed any fraud at all?

CHREMYLOS: Not me!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Heracles! Come, where should one turn?
For you're not willing to explain the truth!

CHREMYLOS: You're accusing before knowing from me what the affair is!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Look, man, for only a little trifle,
I am willing to take care of this—before the city learns:
I'll seal the mouths of the orators with some coins!

380 **CHREMYLOS:** And—by the gods!—you seem to me to be ready
To spend three hundred drachma and reckon it twelve hundred!

BLEPSIDEMOS: I envisage one who is sitting on the rostrum,
Holding the bough of supplication, with his children

And his wife—no different from
The Heraclidae of Pamphilus!³⁹

CHREMYLOS: No, you who are beset by an evil divine spirit! But it is
Only the worthy and the just⁴⁰ and the moderate-thinking,
Whom I am going to make wealthy henceforth!

BLEPSIDEMOS: What are you saying?
You've stolen that much?!

CHREMYLOS: Ai yi yi! With these evils
You are destroying me!

390

BLEPSIDEMOS: You are destroying yourself, it seems to me!

CHREMYLOS: No indeed, since it is Wealth, you villain, that I have!

BLEPSIDEMOS: YOU have wealth? Of what sort?

CHREMYLOS: The god Himself!

BLEPSIDEMOS: And where is he?

CHREMYLOS: Inside.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Where?

CHREMYLOS: My place.

BLEPSIDEMOS: YOUR place!?

CHREMYLOS: Certainly.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Won't you go to the crows!? Wealth, at your place!!

CHREMYLOS: By the gods!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Are you speaking the truth?

CHREMYLOS: I declare it.

BLEPSIDEMOS: In the name of Hestia?

CHREMYLOS: By Poseidon.

BLEPSIDEMOS: You mean the sea god?

CHREMYLOS: If there is another Poseidon, then by that other!

39. Apparently the famous painter Pamphilus portrayed, in a scene from mythic tradition, the children of the dead Heracles with their grandmother supplicating the king of Athens for protection from the persecution of Eurystheus, a powerful Mycenean king.

40. Some major manuscripts have "dextrous" instead of "just."

BLEPSIDEMOS: But you aren't sending him [Wealth] around to us,
your friends?!

CHREMYLOS: This is not yet what's to be done at this time.

BLEPSIDEMOS: What do you mean? Not time for sharing?

400 **CHREMYLOS:** No, by Zeus!—because what's necessary first . . .

BLEPSIDEMOS: Is what?

CHREMYLOS: Is for us two to make him see.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Who see? Explain!

CHREMYLOS: Wealth—even as before, somehow.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Because he really is blind?

CHREMYLOS: Yes, by Uranus!

BLEPSIDEMOS: So it's not without reason then that he never comes to me!

CHREMYLOS: But if the gods are willing, he'll arrive now!

BLEPSIDEMOS: So isn't it necessary to bring in some doctor?

CHREMYLOS: What doctor is there in the city now?

For there's no pay, and so no practice of the art.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Let's look. [He looks around the audience.]

CHREMYLOS: But there isn't any!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Nor does there seem to me to be.

410 **CHREMYLOS:** But by Zeus, what has been planned for a while

By me—to have him lie down in the temple of Asclepius—

Is what is most effective.

BLEPSIDEMOS: Yes, by far, by the gods!

Don't spend time now, but accomplish it!

CHREMYLOS: Indeed, I'm on my way!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Hurry!

CHREMYLOS: I shall! [Starts to hurry off.]

[Enter Poverty.]

POVERTY: Oh, it is a brazen deed, and impious, and against the law,

That you two little humans, beset with an evil divine spirit, dare to do!

Where, oh where, are you fleeing? Why aren't you staying?

BLEPSIDEMOS:

Heracles!

POVERTY: I shall destroy you evil ones, in an evil fashion!

For you two have dared a piece of daring that is intolerable,

Such as no one else ever has done,

Neither god nor human. As a consequence, you two shall die!

420

CHREMYLOS: But WHO are *you*!? For you seem to me to be ghastly pale!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Perhaps she's a Fury from tragedy;⁴¹

She stares in a mad and tragic way, at any rate.

CHREMYLOS: But she doesn't have torches.

BLEPSIDEMOS:

Well then, she'll weep!

POVERTY: Who do you *suppose* Me to be?

CHREMYLOS:

A tavern hostess,

Or a pudding-seller. Otherwise you wouldn't be

Yelling so much at us when you've been done no injustice!

POVERTY: In truth?! So you two haven't committed the most terrible of

Things, in seeking to throw me out of the entire land?!

430

CHREMYLOS: Well, wouldn't the pit for criminals' corpses be left for you?

But you better tell who you are, very quickly!

POVERTY: I am SHE who will today make you two pay the judicial penalty,

For seeking to make *me* vanish from here!

BLEPSIDEMOS: So then is she that neighborhood barmaid,

Who's always cheating me with the cup-measures?

POVERTY: I'm *POVERTY*—who've been living with you two all these

many years!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Leader Apollo and gods! Where might one flee?

CHREMYLOS: Here, what are you doing? Oh you most cowardly of beasts!

Will you not stay?!

440

BLEPSIDEMOS:

Least of all!

41. Perhaps a reference to the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. When it is pointed out to Blepsidemus that she does not have the torches that Furies were believed to carry, he ceases to fear her.

CHREMYLOS: You're not staying?!—

But we, two real men, are going to flee one woman?!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Yes, for she's *Poverty*, you rascal!—Than whom no
Animal more destructive has ever existed by nature!

CHREMYLOS: Stand! I beseech you, stand!

BLEPSIDEMOS: By Zeus, not me!

CHREMYLOS: Now I say that it will be the most terrible deed by far,
Of all deeds, that we will be doing, if
Leaving the god deserted, we will flee,
Fearing this woman, and won't fight!

BLEPSIDEMOS: Trusting in what sort of weapons or power?

450 For what breastplate, what shield,
Has this most abominable one not made to be pawned?

CHREMYLOS: Be bold! For I know that this god by himself
Will set up a victory trophy over her ways!

POVERTY: You two, you rubbish, dare to mutter,
Having been caught in the act of doing terrible things?

CHREMYLOS: And you, worst of lost ones, why do you revile
Us, coming forward when you have been done nothing unjust?

POVERTY: Nothing! Oh before the gods! Do you believe
You do me no injustice in trying to make Wealth

460 See again?

CHREMYLOS: Why in this are we doing you an injustice,
If we provide good for all humans?

POVERTY: What good would you two devise?

CHREMYLOS: What?—First, throwing *you* out of Greece!

POVERTY: Throwing Me out! And what would you two believe
Would be a greater evil you could do to humans?

CHREMYLOS: What?—Well, if we were going to *forget* to do this very thing!

POVERTY: And now about this, I am willing to enter into a debate with
you two,
First off; and I would demonstrate that I alone

Am the cause of all good things for you,
And that through me you live! And if not,

470

You two do now whatever this is that seems best to you.

CHREMYLOS: You dare to say this, you most abominable one?!

POVERTY: And *you* learn it! For I think that I'll rather easily
Demonstrate that you are completely in error,
If you claim that you will make the just wealthy.

CHREMYLOS: Oh clubs and stocks, won't you come help?

POVERTY: You shouldn't rage and shout before you've learned.

CHREMYLOS: And who could refrain from shouting
When he hears such things?

POVERTY: He who thinks well.

CHREMYLOS: What judicial penalty shall I write up for you,
If you're defeated?

480

POVERTY: Whatever suits your opinion.

CHREMYLOS: Nobly spoken.

POVERTY: For it is the same that you two ought to suffer, if you two lose.

CHREMYLOS: Do you believe twenty deaths sufficient?

BLEPSIDEMOS: For her, yes; but for us two, only two will suffice.

POVERTY: It won't be long before you undergo this, for what
Just thing would anyone still have to say on the other side?

CHORUS LEADER: But now you must say something wise by which you can
win against her,

By speaking opposing arguments, and showing no softness!

CHREMYLOS: For my part I think that this is known plainly to all alike:

That it is just for the worthy among humans to prosper;

490

And for the wicked and the atheists, surely the contrary.

Now it is this that we desire, and have with toil figured out, so

That there has come into being a plan that is noble, and well-born, and
useful for every work.

For, if Wealth now should see, and not wander about being blind,

He will go to the good among humans and will not leave them,

While He will flee the wicked and the atheists; and then he will make
Everyone worthy and wealthy, surely, and reverencing the divine.
And who would ever devise something better for humans than this?

BLEPSIDEMOS: No one! I am a witness of this on your behalf. Don't ask
her this!

500 **CHREMYLOS:** For, as life *now* is disposed for us humans, who would not
Consider it to be mad and, moreover, beset with an evil divine spirit?
For many humans are wealthy, being rogues,
Having acquired unjustly; and many who are very worthy
Fare badly, starve, and spend most of the time with You.
I assert that this would not be, if Wealth were once to see, and stop her!—
Taking a path by which he would provide great good to humans.

POVERTY: Oh you two—of all humans the most easily persuaded, to
become unsound!

Two old men, partners in driveling and missing the point!
If what you two long for were to come to pass, I assert that it would not be
to your profit.

510 For if Wealth were to see again, and to divide himself equally,
No one among humans would care for art or wisdom;
And if both of these disappear for you, then who will be willing
To work in bronze, or to build ships, or to sew, or to make wheels,
Or to make shoes, or to work in stone, or to launder, or to tan hides,
Or, having broken the surface of the earth with ploughs, to harvest the
fruit of Demeter—if it were
Possible for you to live in idleness, without care for all these?

CHREMYLOS: You are driveling drivels! For all these things you have gone
through now
The servants will toil at for us!

POVERTY: From where will you have servants?

CHREMYLOS: We'll buy them with the money, of course!

POVERTY: But in the first place, who'll be the seller,
520 When he too has money?

CHREMYLOS: Some merchant wishing to gain,
Who arrives from Thessaly, where there are the most slaves.

POVERTY: But in the first place, no one at all will be a slave trader,
 According to the argument you're uttering. For who of the rich will be
 willing to
 Do this, risking his own life [literally, "soul"]?
 So you yourself will be constrained to plow and to dig and to toil at the
 other things,
 Wearing out a life much more painful than the one now!

CHREMYLOS: Let this curse be on your head!

POVERTY: In addition, you won't be able to sleep in a bed, because there
 won't be any;
 Nor even in covers; because who'll be willing to weave when there's gold?
 Nor will you two be able to perfume with drops of scent your bride when
 you lead her home,
 Nor to adorn her with the expenses of variegated dyed robes. 530
 And indeed what more is there to wealth if you lack these things?
 But through me, all these things that you two need are readily provided;
 For I sit like a mistress constraining the craftsman
 Through need and poverty to seek a livelihood.

CHREMYLOS: What good are *you* able to provide?—except burns from
 the bath,⁴²
 And the uproar from starving little kids and old hags?
 And I can't count for you the number of the lice and the mosquitoes and
 the fleas
 Who torment, humming around the head,
 Waking one up and saying, "you will starve, so get up!"
 Besides these things, instead of a cloak, one has a rag; instead of a bed, 540
 Straw full of bugs who wake up the sleepers;
 And you have a rotten rush mat instead of a rug; instead of a pillow,
 A big stone for your head; instead of bread, you'll eat
 Mallow shoots; and instead of cakes, withered radish leaves;
 Instead of a bench, the top of a shattered jug; instead of a
 kneading trough,

42. The poor had to crowd one another around the stove in the public baths.

The rib of a wine cask—and that broken! So then don't I
Show you to be the cause of many goods for all humans!

POVERTY: You haven't been speaking of *my* life, but knocking that
of beggars!

CHREMYLOS: Don't we declare that Poverty is sister to Beggary?

550 **POVERTY:** You're the ones who say that Dionysius is the same as
Thrasybulus!⁴³

But my life doesn't suffer these things—by Zeus!—nor will it!
For the life of a beggar, about which you speak, is to live having nothing;
But the life of the poor man is to live frugally and with labors,
And there is no surplus for him, but neither does he lack.

CHREMYLOS: How blessed—by Demeter!—is his life as you go through it,
If, having been frugal, and toiled, he leaves not enough for a tomb!

POVERTY: Try to joke and make a comedy, careless of being serious—
Not knowing that I produce better real men than does Wealth,
Both in judgment and in form. For through *him* they have gouty feet,
560 And they're pot-bellied, and fat in the calves, and licentious fatsos;
While with *me* they're lean, wasp-waisted, and baleful for enemies!

CHREMYLOS: For it is probably from starvation that you provide them the
wasp-waists!

POVERTY: I now conclude, concerning moderation; and I teach you two,
That orderliness dwells with me—but with Wealth is *hubris*.

CHREMYLOS: It's certainly very orderly to steal and to break through
house walls!

BLEPSIDEMOS: By Zeus, how is it not orderly, if one has to escape notice?

POVERTY: And now consider the orators in the cities, how when
They are poor, they are just, as regards the populace and the city,
But when they get rich from the common funds, they immediately
become unjust:

570 Plotting against the majority, and making war on the populace.

43. Dionysius was a famous tyrant. Thrasybulus led the liberation of Athens from The Thirty tyrants.

CHREMYLOS: But as regards none of these things, at least, do you lie, even if you are a malicious slanderer.

Still, don't preen yourself on this account; you shall weep,
Because you seek to persuade us of this—that Poverty is better
than Wealth.

POVERTY: And you at any rate have in no way been able to refute me in
this matter,
But you chatter and flap about!

CHREMYLOS: And why does everyone *flee* you?

POVERTY: Because I make them better! The evidence is seen especially in
Children: for they flee their fathers when the latter are prudently
thinking about what is best for them.
Thus it is a difficult task to discern the just.

CHREMYLOS: So then You will assert that Zeus does not correctly discern
what is superior;
For That One also has Wealth!

580

BLEPSIDEMOS: —And HER, he sends to us!

POVERTY: You are both blind in your thinking, with the blindness
of Kronos!⁴⁴

Zeus is surely poor—and *this* I shall now plainly teach you.
For if he were rich, how is it that when he himself made the
Olympic contest,
So that all the Greeks would gather every five years,
He announced that he would crown the winners among the contestants
With an *olive wreath*? Surely, he would have required gold, if he'd
been rich!

CHREMYLOS: It's exactly in this way that That One clearly honors Wealth!
Being thrifty and wishing not to spend any of him,
He lavishes nonsense on the victors and keeps Wealth for himself!

POVERTY: You seek to tar him with a shame greater than that of Poverty,
If he, being wealthy, is so illiberal and so fond of gain!

590

44. Implying antiquated thinking, belonging to the eon (the reign of Kronos) before the reign of Zeus.

CHREMYLOS: May Zeus destroy you, after crowning you with an olive wreath!

POVERTY: You have the gall to deny that all good things come to you Through Poverty!

CHREMYLOS: It's possible to learn this from Hecate—that is, Whether being wealthy or being poor is better: for she tells Those who have, and are wealthy, to send her a monthly meal, While the poor among humans steal it before it's set down!⁴⁵— But perish, and cease to mumble Anymore about anything;

600 For you will not persuade, not even if you were to persuade!

POVERTY: Oh city of Argos, listen to what sort of things he is saying!⁴⁶

CHREMYLOS: She's calling Pauson⁴⁷ to be her messmate!

POVERTY: The suffering I am enduring!

CHREMYLOS: Go from us to the crows, quickly!

POVERTY: Where on earth shall I go?

CHREMYLOS: Go to the pillory! But you shouldn't delay— Get it over with!

POVERTY: Yet you two shall send for me, To come back here again!

[Poverty exits.]

610 **CHREMYLOS:** Come home at that time; but now be hanged! It is better for me to be wealthy, And to let you bewail at length, beating your own head!

BLEPSIDEMOS: By Zeus, I for my part am willing, being wealthy, To feast with my children And wife; and, having bathed,

45. On the thirtieth day of every month, the rich were supposed to have a meal put at one of the shrines to Hecate (a goddess of magic—cf. *Wasps* 804) situated where three roads met; and these meals (actually scraps, according to Demosthenes—54.39) became a dole for paupers.

46. A spoofing echo of Euripides' *Telephus*—of which we possess only fragments. Cf. *Knights* 813.

47. A painter, who is also teased for his poverty at *Acharnians* 854 and *Thesmophoriazuesae* 949.

To proceed glistening from the baths—
And to the craftsmen,
And to Poverty—blow a fart!

CHREMYLOS: This worn out hag has left us.
But let's me and you as quickly as possible
Lay the god down in the temple of Asclepius!

620

BLEPSIDEMOS: And let's certainly not take any time, lest someone else
Should come, preventing the doing of some of the work at hand.

CHREMYLOS: Boy! Cario! You need to carry out the blankets,
And bring the god Himself, with customary observances,
And whatever else is well arranged within.

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]
[The following morning . . .]

CARIO: Oh you old men who have sopped up the most soup
With the smallest barley cakes at the feasts of Theseus!⁴⁸
How good your fortune is! How blessedly you fare!—
As do others, who partake of worthy character!

630

CHORUS LEADER: What is it, you best among your friends?
For you evidently come as a messenger of something worthy!

CARIO: The master has fared in most lucky fashion,
Or rather Wealth Himself has: for "instead of being blind,
The pupils of his eyes are opened and made bright,
Through chancing upon a propitious healing song of Asclepius!"⁴⁹

CHORUS LEADER: What you say brings me joy, what you say makes
me cheer!

CARIO: Joy it is, whether you wish it or you don't!

CHORUS LEADER: I will cheer for Asclepius, favored in his offspring,⁵⁰
And a great beacon for mortals!

640

48. The feasts of Theseus included meager public meals for the poor, consisting of soup and barley cakes, hollowed as scoops.

49. The scholia say that this contains a quotation from Sophocles' lost play *Phineus*.

50. A reference to families of doctors spread over Greece, who were reputed to be descendants of Asclepius.

WIFE [of Chremylos]: What ever is the shouting about? Is there a
Report of something worthy? For it is this I have been longing for,
During the time I've been sitting within, waiting for him.

CARIO: Quickly, quickly bring wine, Mistress, so that
You too can drink! For you very much like to do that!
And I bring you all good things together!

WIFE: And where is he?

CARIO: In what's to be said you will soon know.

WIFE: Well then, finish whatever you have to say!

CARIO: Just listen, as I relate to you
650 The entire affair, from the feet to the head.

WIFE: Not on my head!⁵¹

CARIO: Not even the good things
Which have now come to pass?

WIFE: Not any trouble, now!

CARIO: Well:⁵² as quickly as possible we arrived at the god,
Bringing this man who was in miserable condition then,
But now is blessed and happy if anyone is—
First, indeed, we took him to the sea,
And then washed him.

WIFE: By Zeus, he was then
Happy!?!—an old man, being washed in the cold sea!?

CARIO: And then we went to the sanctuary of the god;
660 And when on the altar a cake and preparatory sacrifices
Had been consecrated—"fuel for the Hephaestean flame,"⁵³
We laid Wealth down, as was suitable.
And each of us put together a bed of straw.

WIFE: And were there others beseeching the god?

51. "On your head" was a common phrase used to curse.

52. The long speech of Cario's that follows is a comic equivalent of speeches by messengers that are common in tragedy.

53. A spoofing quotation from an unknown tragedy.

CARIO: There was one, Neoclides,⁵⁴ who's blind,
 But in stealing overshoots those who see;
 And many others, who had all sorts of illnesses.
 And as he put out the lamps,
 The servant of the god enjoined us to sleep,
 Saying that if anyone perceived a noise
 He should keep silent. We all lay down in orderly fashion.
 But I wasn't able to sleep; I was distracted
 By a pot of porridge that lay
 A little above the head of an old hag—
 And to which I had a preternatural desire to creep.
 Then, opening my eyes, I saw the priest
 Stealing the muffins and the figs
 From the sacred table! After this,
 He circled around to all the altars
 Upon which were left cakes—
 Then he "consecrated" these in a certain sack.
 So I, believing that there was much piety in the deed,
 Went after the pot of porridge.

670

680

WIFE: You greatest wretch among men! Didn't you fear the god?

CARIO: By the gods, I did—lest
 He should get to the pot ahead of me, with his chaplets;
 Because this priest had previously instructed me!
 But the old hag, when she perceived my noise,
 Stretched out her hand; and I, hissing,
 Took it with my teeth as if I were a brown snake;⁵⁵
 She drew back her hand at once,
 And lay wrapping herself up quietly,
 Farting from fear with a stench worse than a weasel!
 At that point I gulped much of the porridge,
 And, when I was full, ceased.

690

54. An orator and "sycophant." See *Assemblywomen* 254, 398–407.

55. These snakes were ritually kept in sacred precincts, and twin snakes were closely associated with Asclepius, whose famous doctor's symbol is the staff around which two snakes are entwined.

WIFE: The god didn't approach you?

CARIO: Not yet.

After this I did do something ridiculous.

For as he approached, I

Farted a great fart (because my stomach was inflated).

700 **WIFE:** Well, surely on account of that he was revolted by you!

CARIO: Nope; but Iaso,⁵⁶ who was following, blushed a bit,

And Panacea turned away,

Holding her nose: because I don't fart frankincense!

WIFE: But He Himself?

CARIO: Oh, by Zeus, he didn't mind!

WIFE: Well then, you're saying the god is a rude fellow!

CARIO: By Zeus, I am not! After all, he IS a shit-eater.⁵⁷

WIFE: You wretch!

CARIO: After these things, I at once hid myself,

In fear; and That One went around

Examining all the illnesses in a very orderly fashion.

710 Then a boy placed before him a stone pestle,

And mortar, and a little box.

WIFE: Stone?

CARIO: By Zeus, not the box!

WIFE: But how did you see, you worst of lost ones,

When you claim you had hidden yourself?!

CARIO: Through my cloak:

For by Zeus, it has not a few holes!

He first of all went about

Grinding a medicinal ointment for Neoclides, into which he put

Three heads of Tenian garlic; then he pounded

And mixed, in the mortar, fig-tree sap

720 And bitter mastich; then, moistening it with Sphettian vinegar,

56. Iaso and Panacea were daughters of Asclepius.

57. The scholia explain that this refers to the fact that doctors examine excretion.

He turned up his eyelids and applied it to him—
 So that the pain would be greater; and he screamed
 And shouted, sprang up, and ran away. The god said laughing:
 “Now sit there plastered,
 So that I stop you from swearing oaths⁵⁸ in the assemblies!”

WIFE: What a lover of the city is the Divinity, and wise!

CARIO: After this, he sat down next to Wealthikins,
 And first he touched his head,
 And then, taking a clean cloth,
 He wiped around the eyes; and Panacea
 Spread a red cloth over his head
 And his whole face; then the god whistled,
 And there darted out of the sanctuary two serpents,
 Of a size more than natural!

730

WIFE: Oh dear gods!

CARIO: These two, quietly plunging under the cloth,
 Licked his eyelids, as it seemed to me;
 And before it would be possible for you to drink ten goblets of wine,
 Oh Mistress, Wealth stood up seeing!
 And I clapped my hands with pleasure,
 And woke the Master. But the god immediately
 Made himself disappear, along with the serpents, into the sanctuary.
 And how do you suppose the ones lying with him
 Embraced Wealth, and stayed up the whole night,
 Until the day broke!
 And I praised the god very much,
 Because he quickly made Wealth see,
 But made Neoclides more blind.

740

WIFE: What power You have, Master and Leader!
 But tell me, where is Wealth?

CARIO: He's coming.
 But there was a crowd around him of more than natural size.

750

58. The meaning of the Greek term is uncertain; it seems to signify some sort of obstructive affidavit procedure in the Assembly.

For the just, who before had a scanty life,
 Greeted him and
 All took his hand out of delight;
 But as many as were wealthy and had much,
 Having acquired their livelihood by unjust means,
 Knitting their brows, looked angry.
 The others, however, followed along—wreathed,
 Laughing, and speaking phrases of good omen; and
 The shoes of the old men beat a rhythmic step.—
 760 But come! [To chorus] All together with one voice,
 Dance and jump and make a choral procession!
 For no one will come in bringing to you the message,
 That there is no barley in the bag!

WIFE: By Hecate, and I want to crown
 You—with a chain of barley cakes⁵⁹—as a reward for good tidings,
 For having brought such reports!

CARIO: Don't delay anymore,
 As the men are near the doors already!

WIFE: Come, I'm going in to fetch welcoming sweets,
 As if for newly-purchased—eyes!⁶⁰

[Exit Wife.]

770 **CARIO:** And I want to go to meet them!

[Exit Cario.]

[A Short Song and Dance by the Chorus]

[Enter Wealth.]

WEALTH: And I make obeisance first to the Sun,
 Then to the famous plain of Pallas Athena,
 And the entire land of Cecrops,⁶¹ that welcomes me.
 And I am ashamed of my misfortunes,

59. Bringers of good tidings were customarily crowned; the barley cakes are peculiarly suited to Cario, with his focus on food.

60. It was a custom to welcome newly purchased slaves by showering them with sweets as they entered the house for the first time.

61. The first legendary king of Attica.

Of the sort of humans with whom I consorted without realizing it—
 While those who were deserving of my company,
 I avoided, knowing nothing! Alas for me,
 That neither the former nor the latter did I do correctly!
 But now, reversing all these things,
 I will show henceforth to all humans that
 I gave myself to the wicked involuntarily.

780

[Enter Chremylos.]

CHREMYLOS: Go to the crows! —How difficult are the friends
 Who show up immediately when one is prospering!
 For they prod and they crush my calves,
 Each making a show of some goodwill.
 Who has not greeted me?! What elderly mob
 Has not encircled me in the agora?!

WIFE: Oh dearest of men—welcome to you—and to you!
 Come now, it is the lawful custom:
 Taking hold of you, I pour the sweets over you, thus!⁶²

790

WEALTH: No! For when I am entering a house
 For the first time with sight, it is
 Fitting that nothing be carried out, but only carried in.

WIFE: Then You won't accept the sweets?!

WEALTH: Inside, next to the hearth, as is the lawful custom!
 And then we would avoid the vulgarity.
 For it is not fitting for The Teacher⁶³
 To throw little figs and sweets to the spectators,
 And with these to force a laugh from them.

WIFE: You speak very well; for Dexinikos⁶⁴ there
 Was getting up from his seat to rob the figs!

800

[They go in.]

62. Both "you's" in this line refer to Wealth.

63. The producer, who was Aristophanes himself. The producer was designated "The Teacher" because his main concern was instructing the chorus and actors.

64. Some otherwise unknown member of the original audience.

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]

[Enter Cario.]

CARIO: How sweet it is, men, to fare happily,
 And without any outlay from home!
 For a heap of good things has burst into our homes
 Without us doing anything unjust!
 To be wealthy thus is indeed a sweet affair!
 The flour bin is full of white barley,
 And the amphora of dark, flower-scented wine.
 And with silver and gold are all our wallets full, in wondrous fashion.
 810 And the cistern is full of olive oil; and the little cups
 Teem with myrrh, and the attic with dried figs.
 Every cruet and platter and pot
 Has become bronze; the rancid trenchers
 For fish are seen to be silver.
 The privy has suddenly become ivory for us.
 And we servants gamble with golden coins.
 We wipe our bottoms no longer with stones,
 But with garlic stalks, out of luxury, each time.
 And now the master, wreathed, is inside slaying for sacrifice
 820 A pig and a billy-goat and a ram.
 The smoke has driven me out. I could no longer
 Remain within, for it pained my eyes.

[Enter Just Man followed by boy carrying an old cloak and shoes.]

JUST MAN: Follow along with me, boy, so that to the god
 We may come.

CARIO: Well, who's this coming here?

JUST MAN: A man who before was miserable, but is now fortunate!

CARIO: Obviously you are one of the worthy, as you appear.

JUST MAN: Very much so.

CARIO: So what do you need?

JUST MAN: To the god
 I'm coming; for he is the cause for me of great goods!
 For I, inheriting from my father sufficient property,

Came to the aid of friends in need,
Believing it to be useful in life.

830

CARIO: And presumably the money quickly left you!

JUST MAN: Exactly!

CARIO: So after this, you were miserable.

JUST MAN: Exactly! And I thought that those whom for so long
I benefited, when they were needy, I would have as friends
Who were really firm, if I should ever be in need;
But they turned away and seemed not to see me anymore.

CARIO: And did it laughing!—I know!

JUST MAN: Exactly!
For the drought in my coin jars was destroying me.

CARIO: But not now!

840

JUST MAN: Which is why I am coming to the god—
To give a just prayer of thanks.

CARIO: But what, in the name of the gods, is the old cloak for,
Which this little boy who's with you is carrying? Explain.

JUST MAN: This too I am going to dedicate to the god.

CARIO: So presumably you were initiated into the greater mysteries while
wearing it?⁶⁵

JUST MAN: No, but I shivered in it for thirteen years!

CARIO: And the shoes?

JUST MAN: And these have spent winters with me.

CARIO: So you're bearing these also to dedicate?

JUST MAN: Yes, by Zeus!

CARIO: Refined gifts that you've come bearing for the god!

[Enter Sycophant, accompanied by Witness.]

65. The mystery rite of initiation, celebrated at Eleusis, where it was the custom to wear and dedicate old clothes. See *Frogs* 404–7.

850 **SYCOPHANT:** Alas! Beset by an evil divine spirit, how wretchedly I've
been destroyed!

And triply beset by an evil divine spirit, and fourfold, and fivefold,
And twelvefold, and a thousandfold! Ai yi yi!
With so prolific a divine spirit am I bound up!

CARIO: Apollo and the dear gods avert it!
Whatever evil is it that the fellow has suffered?

SYCOPHANT: Have I not now suffered harsh evils,
With everything in my home utterly taken,
On account of this god—Who will be blind
Once again, if acts of court justice be not lacking!

860 **JUST MAN:** In my opinion I am pretty sure I know what's the matter.
For a certain man arrives who's faring badly;
And he's likely to be minted wickedness.

CARIO: Well by Zeus, his destruction is nobly done!

SYCOPHANT: Where, where is he who promised that through himself alone
He would make us all wealthy immediately,
If again as at the beginning he had sight? But he
Has instead destroyed some people!

CARIO: And to whom has he done this?

SYCOPHANT: ME! Here!

CARIO: But you were one of the wicked and the housebreakers?

870 **SYCOPHANT:** By Zeus, there's no soundness in any of you,
And there's no way that you don't have my goods!

CARIO: How arrogantly—Oh Demeter!—has the sycophant
Entered! He's plainly suffering from the hunger of an ox.

SYCOPHANT: You shall not delay in proceeding at once to the agora,
For there you must be racked on the wheel to
Make you say what crimes you have committed!

CARIO: You'll howl for that!

JUST MAN: By Zeus the Savior! Deserving of much
From all the Greeks is the god who
Wretchedly destroys the wretched sycophants!

SYCOPHANT: Alas, alas! *You*, too, are partaking in the mockery?!—
 For from where did you take this cloak?!
 Yesterday I saw you wearing a rag!

JUST MAN: I don't hold you in awe, for I bought
 This ring-amulet from Eudamus for a drachma.⁶⁶

CARIO: But there's nothing in it against the bite of a sycophant!

SYCOPHANT: But is this not great hubris?! You two jeer,
 But what the two of you are up to here you have not said:
 For you're not up to any good here!

JUST MAN: By Zeus, not for you, you can be sure!

SYCOPHANT: For you two are about to feast from my goods, by Zeus!

CARIO: May you truly, along with your witness,
 Burst yourselves from emptiness!

SYCOPHANT: Do you deny it? There is within, you most cursed one,
 Much salted fish and roasted meat!
 Sniff-sniff, sniff-sniff, sniff-sniff, sniff-sniff, sniff-sniff.

CARIO: What are you—beset by an evil divine spirit—smelling?

JUST MAN: Maybe it's the cold—
 Since he's wearing such a rag!

SYCOPHANT: Are these things to be tolerated, Oh Zeus and gods?!—
 That these people are insolent to ME?! Alas, how I am pained,
 That being a worthy man and a friend to the city I suffer evilly!

JUST MAN: YOU a friend to the city and worthy?!

SYCOPHANT: Like no other man!

JUST MAN: So answer my questions—

SYCOPHANT: About what?

JUST MAN: Are you a farmer?

SYCOPHANT: Do you suppose me so melancholy-mad?

JUST MAN: Then a merchant?

66. According to Theophrastus (*Enquiry into Plants* 9.17.2), "Eudamus the seller of medicines had a great reputation in the art." A drachma is not a cheap price.

SYCOPHANT: Ye-e-s, or at least, that's my excuse, when chance requires.⁶⁷

JUST MAN: What then?—have you learned some craft?

SYCOPHANT: By Zeus, no!

JUST MAN: So how do you support yourself, or from what source, since you do nothing?

SYCOPHANT: I am one who cares for the affairs of the city,
And of all the private persons!

JUST MAN: You! Having learned *what*?

SYCOPHANT: "I will!"⁶⁸

JUST MAN: How then would you be worthy, you housebreaker,
910 If you make yourself hated, through what is not at all your business?

SYCOPHANT: Because is it not fitting that my own city be
Done good deeds by me, as much as is in my strength, featherbrain?

JUST MAN: So being a busybody is doing good deeds?!

SYCOPHANT: Indeed: coming to the aid of the established laws,
And not leaving it to another if someone does wrong.

JUST MAN: Are there not jurors for that purpose whom the city
Appoints to rule?

SYCOPHANT: But who prosecutes?

JUST MAN: "The one who wills."

SYCOPHANT: So then I am that one!
Therefore the affairs of the city fall on me.

920 JUST MAN: By Zeus, then it has a wicked leader!
But would you not "will" *this*: keeping quiet
To live in idleness?

SYCOPHANT: But you are speaking of the life of a sheep,
If no occupation is evident in life!

JUST MAN: You would not learn new ways?

67. To be a merchant could exempt one from military service. Cf. *Assemblywomen* 1027.

68. This is a legal expression referring to the right of any citizen ("he who wills") to initiate a legal action in certain cases—which enabled the sycophants to bring their lawsuits against the rich.

SYCOPHANT: Not if you would give me
Wealth Himself and the fennel of Battus!⁶⁹

JUST MAN: Quickly lay down your cloak! . . .

CARIO: It's YOU he's speaking to!

JUST MAN: Then undo your sandals! . . .

CARIO: All these things are said to YOU!

SYCOPHANT: Let him among you come against me here
"Who wills!"

CARIO: Then I am he!!

SYCOPHANT: Alas, alas! I'm being stripped in daylight!

930

CARIO: For you would deserve it, eating by meddling in others' business!

SYCOPHANT [to Witness]: Do you see the things he's doing? I call you to
witness these things!

JUST MAN: But he's leaving in flight—the one you brought to be a witness!

SYCOPHANT: Alas I'm alone and surrounded!

CARIO: Now do you shout?

SYCOPHANT: Alas, alas again!

CARIO [to Boy]: You, give me the rag,
So that I can clothe this sycophant.

JUST MAN: No indeed! For it's been sacred to Wealth for some time.

CARIO: But where will it be offered up more nobly,
Than draped around a wicked man and a housebreaker?
But Wealth it is fitting to adorn with august robes.

940

JUST MAN: What's to be done with this footwear? Tell me.

CARIO: These I shall nail on his forehead immediately,
As on an olive tree.⁷⁰

SYCOPHANT: I am leaving. For I know that I am much weaker than
You. But if I get some partner,

69. Silphium or giant fennel was the source of the wealth of the city of Cyrene, whose founder was Battus.

70. Offerings were often nailed to olive trees in sanctuaries.

Even if he's fig-wood,⁷¹ this strong god
 I shall make pay a judicial penalty today,
 Because he, being one alone, is plainly dissolving
 The democracy, having persuaded neither the Council
 950 Of the citizens nor the Assembly!

JUST MAN: And now, since it's with my panoply
 That you are going, run to the bath;
 And then stand there as the chorus leader of warmth.
 For I held that station once.

CARIO: But the keeper of the bath will grab him by the balls
 And throw him out the door; for on seeing him he'll recognize
 The minting of wickedness!
 But now let's go in, so that you may pray to the god.

[Exit Cario, Just Man, and the boy.]

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]

[Enter Old Woman with an attendant carrying a tray of sweets.]

OLD WOMAN: Have we then, you dear old men,
 960 Really arrived at the house of this new god,
 Or have we completely missed the way?

CHORUS LEADER: But know, that you have arrived at the very doors—
 Young lady: for you inquire as one in bloom.

OLD WOMAN: Well, I'll call now for someone of those within.
 [Chremylos comes out.]

CHREMYLOS: No need—for I myself have come out.
 But you ought to say why exactly you have come.

OLD WOMAN: Dearest one, I have suffered terrible things, illegal things!
 For from the time when this god began to see,
 He has made life unlivable for me!

970 **CHREMYLOS:** What's the matter? —Or is it not, presumably, that you too
 Were a "sycophant,"⁷² among the women?

71. A play on the word "fig-wood" (*sykinos*)—used metaphorically for something cheap and worthless—and the word "sycophant."

72. Here there is a double-entendre: the verbal form of "sycophant" was slang for sexual congress.

OLD WOMAN: By Zeus, I was not!

CHREMYLOS: But you were drinking, when you hadn't drawn an inscribed lot?⁷³

OLD WOMAN: You're mocking. But I am itchy in a pitiable fashion!

CHREMYLOS: Won't you then speak and finish the account of the tearing apart?

OLD WOMAN: Listen now: I had a dear youth,
 Poor, but otherwise handsome and noble and
 Worthy; for if I was in need of something,
 He did it all for me in a lovely and beautiful way;
 And I served him, in all these ways.

CHREMYLOS: What was it in particular that he needed each time from you?

980

OLD WOMAN: Not many things. For he was uncustomarily bashful in regard to me.

But he would ask for twenty silver drachmas,
 For a cloak; and eight, for shoes;⁷⁴
 And for his sisters he would ask to buy a little garment;
 And for his mother a little cloak.
 And he would need four bushels of wheat.

CHREMYLOS: By Apollo, these are not many things that
 You've mentioned, but it is clear that he *was* bashful in regard to you!

OLD WOMAN: And these things he asked me for, not out of greed,
 He said, but out of affection,

990

So that by wearing my cloak he would be reminded of me!

CHREMYLOS: You describe a fellow most uncustomarily passionate in love!

OLD WOMAN: But now, the brute is no longer of the same mind,
 But very altered entirely!
 For when I sent to him this flat cake,⁷⁵

73. A jesting reference to the lots by which citizens were assigned to juries, the pay for which supported many of the poor: a woman would not of course participate.

74. These are moderate prices: in the *Assemblywomen* 413 it is said that the cheapest cloak cost sixteen drachmas.

75. There is a double entendre, to which the old woman is oblivious, in the words for "flat cake," "sweets," and "milk cake," which are all slang for the female genitalia.

And the other sweets on the board,
Promising that I would be
Coming in the evening, —

CHREMYLOS: What'd he do to you? Tell me!

OLD WOMAN: He sent back to us this milk cake,

1000 On the condition, that I never again go there,
And in addition to these things, he said, on sending them back, that
“It was long ago that the Milesians once were brave.”⁷⁶

CHREMYLOS: It's obvious that he's not wicked in his ways,
But now that he's wealthy, he's no longer pleased by lentils!
Before, on account of poverty, he'd eat anything!

OLD WOMAN: And yet, before, every day—by the twin goddesses!⁷⁷ —
He always came to my door!

CHREMYLOS: To see if you were being carried out to your funeral?

OLD WOMAN: By Zeus, only out of passionate love to hear my voice!

CHREMYLOS: (So as to get a gift.)

1010 **OLD WOMAN:** And by Zeus, if he perceived me out of sorts,
He would call me the pet-names “duckling” and “little dove!”

CHREMYLOS: (And then probably ask you about shoes.)

OLD WOMAN: And at the Great Mysteries, when I was riding
In my cart,⁷⁸ if someone looked at me,
I would be beaten on⁷⁹ the whole day on account of this—
So jealous the youth was!

CHREMYLOS: (Because he liked to feed alone, probably!)

OLD WOMAN: And he said I had altogether beautiful hands.

CHREMYLOS: (When they stretched forth twenty drachmas.)

1020 **OLD WOMAN:** And he said of my skin that it was sweet to smell.

76. A proverb—originally a line of the poet Anacreon.

77. Demeter and her daughter Persephone.

78. That is, in the ritual procession; only the rich could afford carts.

79. There is a double entendre, unintended by the old woman, in the Greek verb (which is slang for sexual congress).

CHREMYLOS: (If you poured Thasian wine, in all likelihood, by Zeus!)

OLD WOMAN: And how I had a look that was soft and beautiful!

CHREMYLOS: (The fellow wasn't a fool, but knew
That the old lady was a rutting sow, and he fed himself off the estate.)

OLD WOMAN: So, my dear man, in doing these things the god acts
incorrectly,

While claiming always to help those who are done injustice.

CHREMYLOS: Well, what *shall* he do? Say, and its done!

OLD WOMAN: It's just, by Zeus, to compel
The one done well by me to do well to me in return,
Or else it is not just that he have any good.

1030

CHREMYLOS: Didn't he pay you every night?

OLD WOMAN: But he declared that he would never leave me so long as
I lived!

CHREMYLOS: (Rightly indeed; but now he thinks that you no longer live.)

OLD WOMAN: Oh my dear! I have melted away with grief!

CHREMYLOS: (It's rather that you've rotted away, it seems to me!)

OLD WOMAN: You could draw me through a ring!

CHREMYLOS: (If the ring happened to be a barrel hoop!)

OLD WOMAN: And now here comes the youth,
The one I happen to have been accusing for so long!
Likely going to a revel.

CHREMYLOS: So he appears.
He proceeds wreathed, and holding a torch.

1040

YOUNG MAN: I greet you!

OLD WOMAN: What's he say?

YOUNG MAN: Dear ancient one,
You have swiftly become grey, by Uranus!

OLD WOMAN: I am made wretched by suffering such hubris!

CHREMYLOS: It's probably been a long time since he's seen you.

OLD WOMAN: What time, you wretch!—He was with me yesterday!

CHREMYLOS: Then he has undergone the opposite of what happens to
the many;

For being drunk, as is likely, he sees more sharply.

OLD WOMAN: No, but he is always unrestrained in his ways!

1050 **YOUNG MAN:** Oh Poseidon of the sea and elderly gods!
How many wrinkles she has in her face!

OLD WOMAN: Ai yi yi!

Don't bring the torch close to me!

CHREMYLOS: (Well spoken indeed!

For if only one spark seizes her,

She'll burn like an ancient harvest-wreath!)

YOUNG MAN [to Old Woman]: Do you want to fool around with me
for a while?

OLD WOMAN: How?—You rascal!

YOUNG MAN [taking some nuts from the tray]: Right here, taking hold
of the nuts.

OLD WOMAN: What game?

YOUNG MAN: How many teeth you have!⁸⁰

CHREMYLOS: But even I know that:
For she has maybe three or four!

YOUNG MAN: Pay up! For she has only one molar!

1060 **OLD WOMAN:** You wretch among men! In my opinion, you're not sane,
To give me a washing before so many men!

YOUNG MAN: You would profit from it, if someone were to wash you!

CHREMYLOS: No indeed; since now she's dolled up for sale;
But if this white makeup were washed off,
The tatter of her face would be plain!

OLD WOMAN: For an old man, you don't seem to me to be sane!

YOUNG MAN: He's maybe trying you out, and feeling your tits,
Thinking he's escaping my notice.

80. A common child's game was betting on guessing the number of nuts someone held.

OLD WOMAN: By Aphrodite, not mine, you crude fellow!

CHREMYLOS: By Hecate, no! For I'd be crazy!

But young man, I won't let
You hate this girl.

YOUNG MAN: But I am excessively fond of her!

CHREMYLOS: Yet she accuses you.

YOUNG MAN: What's the accusation?

CHREMYLOS: She asserts that you're hubristic, and that you say,
"It was long ago that the Milesians once were brave."

YOUNG MAN: I won't fight with you over her.

CHREMYLOS: What do you mean?

YOUNG MAN: I'm abashed by your age, since
I would never allow another to do this;
But now, go away, take the girl and enjoy yourself!

CHREMYLOS: I know, I know what's in your mind! You probably don't think
It's worthwhile to be with her anymore. 1080

OLD WOMAN: Who's the one "allowing"?

YOUNG MAN: I won't get into a discussion with a woman who's been
thoroughly screwed
By thirteen thousand years/comrades!⁸¹

CHREMYLOS: All the same, since you considered it worth it to drink
the wine,
You have to drink the dregs also.

YOUNG MAN: But she is completely ancient and rotten dregs!

CHREMYLOS: Then a straining cloth will remedy everything!

YOUNG MAN: I'm going inside; for I want to go to the god
To dedicate these wreaths that I have.

OLD WOMAN: And I for my part also wish to say something to Him! 1090

YOUNG MAN: But then I am not going in!

81. The word has this twofold meaning.

CHREMYLOS: Pluck up, don't be afraid!
For she won't commit rape!

YOUNG MAN: You speak very nobly!
For I spent enough time before, plastering her down below!

OLD WOMAN: Go ahead; I'll go in behind you.

[Exit Young Man, Old Woman, and her attendant.]

CHREMYLOS: How intently—Oh Zeus the King!—does the old woman,
Like a barnacle, stick to the youth!

[Exit Chremylos.]

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]

[Enter Hermes.]

CARIO [coming out of the house]: Who's knocking at the door? . . . What
is this? . . .

Looks like no one! But indeed the door
Will wail with sorrow for having made an untoward noise!

HERMES: You! I say:
1100 **Cario!** Stay!

CARIO: Tell me, you:
Were you the one knocking so hard on the door?

HERMES: NO, by Zeus, but I was about to; you anticipated me by opening!
But run fast and summon the master,
And then the wife and the children,
And then the servants, and then the dog,
And then yourself, and then the pig!

CARIO: Tell me,
What's up?

HERMES: Zeus, you rascal, wishes
To grind you up together in the same bowl,
All at once, and throw you into the pit!

1110 **CARIO:** Let the tongue be cut of the herald of these things!
For what reason does he plan to do these things to us?

HERMES: Because you have carried out the most terrible of actions!
For from the beginning of the time when Wealth has started to have

Sight, no one has offered incense, or laurel,
Or barley-cake, or consecrated animal, or any other single thing,
As sacrifice to us gods anymore!

CARIO: No, by Zeus, nor
Will offer sacrifice! For before, you exercised bad providential care of us!

HERMES: The other gods are of less concern to me,
But me! —I'm finished, I'm worn out!

CARIO: You're prudently moderate.

HERMES: For before, I had from the barmaids 1120
All good things, starting from dawn: wine cake, honey,
Figs—as many things as it was likely that Hermes would eat.
But now, I'm starving and cooling my heels.

CARIO: Isn't that just, for you who sometimes used to punish
When you had such goods?

HERMES: Alas, alas!
Alas—for the flat cake that is cooked on the fourth!⁸²

CARIO: “You long for what is not present, and you call in vain.”⁸³

HERMES: Alas for the ham that I used to eat!

CARIO: Hop on the inflated bladders, here in the open air!⁸⁴

HERMES: And for the hot innards that I used to eat! 1130

CARIO: There's probably some pain churning in *your* innards!

HERMES: And alas for the cup with equal parts water and wine!

CARIO: If you take a sip from this, and then run off, you won't be going
too soon!

HERMES: Wouldn't you help your friend a little?

CARIO: If he needs something, and I'm able to be of assistance.

82. The fourth day of each month was traditionally celebrated as the birthday of Hermes, when these cakes were dedicated to him.

83. Another mocking echo of solemn tragedy. According to the scholia, this is a line from a (lost) tragedy, referring to Heracles seeking his beloved, Hylas.

84. A play on words: at a Dionysian festival day named “Askolia”—a word that sounds as if it could mean “ham-less”—a game was played of hopping on inflated bladders.

HERMES: If you could just provide me with some well-baked bread,
And if you could give me some fresh meat to devour,
From what you're sacrificing within.

CARIO: But it's not for export!

HERMES: And when you had lifted some little pot of the master's,
1140 I always made you escape notice!

CARIO: On condition that you got a share, you housebreaker!⁸⁵
For a firm, well-baked cake always came to you!

HERMES: And then you yourself would eat this!

CARIO: For you did not share equally with me in the whippings,
When I was caught being a thorough rascal!

HERMES: Don't be a bearer of grudges, if you've captured Phyle;⁸⁶
But in the name of the gods, receive me into the household!

CARIO: Then will you leave the gods and remain here?

HERMES: Yes. For it is much better with you.

1150 **CARIO:** What? Does deserting seem to you to be civic?

HERMES: For every fatherland is wherever one prospers!⁸⁷

CARIO: What benefit would you be to us by being here?

HERMES: You will install me as the Hinge-god by the door.

CARIO: The Hinge-god? But there's no work for the "shifty."⁸⁸

HERMES: But as the Commerce-god.

CARIO: But we're wealthy; why
Do we need to provide for Hermes the Retailer?

HERMES: But as the Deceiver.

85. Hermes was the god of thieves and thievery.

86. The taking of Phyle was the first big stage in the overthrow of the Thirty tyrants by the democrats, after which there was declared a general amnesty (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.4).

87. Another line spoofing tragedy.

88. "The Hinge-god" designates a traditional role of Hermes, whose statues were placed next to the hinges of the outer door of homes, to ward off other thieves; the words for "hinge" and "shifty" are related, and there is a pun here. In what follows, Hermes tries to find employment by mentioning a series of his traditional roles.

CARIO: Deceiver?! Least of all!
For now there's no work of deception, but straightforward mores.

HERMES: But as the Guide.

CARIO: But the god now sees,
With the result that we don't need a guide anymore.

1160

HERMES: Well, I'll be the Contest-god. Now what will you say?
For this is most congenial to Wealth,
To provide musical and gymnastic contests!⁸⁹

CARIO: How good it is to have many epithets!
For this one has discovered how to make a living for himself!
Not without reason do all the jurors frequently
Hasten to get themselves enrolled in many drawings!

HERMES: So I can come in on these terms?

CARIO: And also you wash
The tripe yourself, after you've gone to the well—
So that you'll immediately seem to be The Server.⁹⁰

1170

[Exit Cario and Hermes.]

[A Short Dance and Song by the Chorus]

[Enter Priest.]

PRIEST: Who can tell me clearly where Chremylos is?

[Enter Chremylos.]

CHREMYLOS: What is it, best one?

PRIEST: What else but bad news?
For from the time when this Wealth began to see,
I've been destroyed by hunger! For I have nothing to eat,
And I'm suffering these things while being a priest of Zeus the Savior!

CHREMYLOS: And what's the reason, in the name of the gods?

PRIEST: No one thinks it worthwhile to sacrifice!

CHREMYLOS: Why is that?

89. The wealthiest citizens paid for the public contests.

90. Hermes had a traditional role as personal servant to Zeus: Aeschylus, *Prometheus* 966.

PRIEST: Because all are rich! And indeed before,
 When they had nothing, the merchant would come
 1180 To sacrifice something because he was preserved; and another
 Because he had been acquitted in a case of justice; and one who had
 Fine auspices from his sacrifice would invite me, the priest to dine;
 but now,
 Not a single one sacrifices anything at all, nor comes in—
 Except that more than a myriad use it to relieve themselves in!

CHREMYLOS: Well, don't you receive the lawful share from these?

PRIEST: So I myself have decided to bid good-bye to Zeus the Savior,
 And to settle down right here!

CHREMYLOS: Pluck up! For you'll do so in noble fashion, if the god
 is willing,
 For Zeus the Savior is himself here,
 1190 Having come of his own accord.

PRIEST: What you say is all good!

CHREMYLOS: Now we're this moment about to perform—stay around—the
 Installation of Wealth, where formerly He was installed—
 Always guarding the back chamber of the goddess.⁹¹
 But let someone give out here lit torches,
 So that you can lead the god's procession with one!

PRIEST: Certainly
 These are the things that ought to be done!

CHREMYLOS: Someone call Wealth outside!

OLD WOMAN: And me, what shall I do?

CHREMYLOS: Take the pots that we'll use in the
 Installation of the god and carry them on your head
 Solemnly. —And you've come with your festive dress!

1200 **OLD WOMAN:** But what about the *reason* I came?

CHREMYLOS: All will be taken care of for you.
 For the youth will come to you in the evening.

91. Athena, in the back room of whose temple on the acropolis the city's treasure was stored in the days of the Athenian empire—whose wealth is now to be more than restored.

OLD WOMAN: But if indeed—by Zeus!—you pledge to me that
He is coming to me, I *will* carry the pots!

CHREMYLOS: And now these pots are doing the opposite of what other
Pots do: for in other pots the “old woman”⁹² is on the top,
But now the pots are on top of this old woman!

CHORUS LEADER: We also shouldn’t tarry, but take up
The rear; for we need to follow behind these, singing.

[Actors and Chorus dance and sing in procession out.]

92. The word for “old woman” is also a word for the scum that forms on the top of heated or cooked liquids in pots.